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512 rejoice, for they know that Kuma, the goddess creator of all things,
517 is content with them and is sending them a greeting in token thereof.
776 On the wings of the wind comes the roar of the araguatos.

But life starts in the east and ends in the west. The day is done and the night comes on. The Yaruros turn to face the east to watch
● 821 the beginning of star travel and also the fiery appearance of the
776 moon and its transformation to a chaste white. The sands glisten and above flash "falling stars", but the Yaruros say that these are messengers of Kuma doing their errands.

512 Then the women roll cigars, light them, and pass them to their men.
276 Everyone smokes and there is great contentment. There is reluctance
462 to stand up, so if a woman has to fetch some object, say a firebrand,
[576] she will crawl on all fours, looking not unlike some large but indescribably graceful ape.

When several stars of the big dipper have appeared the women
512 rise in a body and walk into the darkness west of the camp. They
462 disappear from sight and hearing. What mysteries they perform they only know. The men are left alone and they talk about heaven. The children play merrily.

The women return and quietly take their places, ready to prepare more cigars. It is good to lie naked on the sand looking at the sky,
000 listening to nature's symphony. With the same persistent effortless rhythm of the pulse beat the world outside of the individual is felt. There is the merry laughter of the children and the soft, deep, contented gurgle of the women; the soft voice of the shaman painting religious pictures, explaining existence; the murmur of the wind as a background to the calls of night birds, and the blowing of toninos, the splash of frolicsome fishes, the intermittent howl of the monkeys, the bark of the wolf, the roar of the jaguar; and the warmth of a full stomach.

512 A figure may detach itself from the camp shadows and disappear
796 in the darkness of the west. Several young men may afterwards take the same path—to join the shaman in his preparations for communion with the gods. They leave behind them a feeling of expectation but nothing is said. Someone has put up a bare pole where the sand is hard packed.

796 The shaman returns and goes to sit in front of the pole facing the
791 east. He sits quietly and alone in deep reverie. Later he may ask for a cigar. His wife will supply him with one.

After a period of contemplation he may begin to sing and dance. His people will join him. The music will become more and more animated, the singing and dancing will be done with increasing abandon. The stars and the moon will go their ways to rest in the west.
512 It is only when the sun peeps over the eastern horizon that they will

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181 up and down the rivers in their canoes, or lying on the sand, feasting on crocodile or turtle. He would see stolid fixed faces, uncommunicative, affrighted. But if this traveler were to stay he would discover that from sundown to sunrise the Yaruro lives in an intensive romantic world which he cannot and rarely would care to share with anyone else.

576 787 821 We returned from the trip to La Urbana at sundown when bars of yellow, blue, and white light streaked the western sky. The Yaruros were sitting on the sands watching this phenomenon with a certain rapture. They sat quietly and in silence facing the west until the lights had faded and merged into a subdued golden glow. Then Landaeta came and greeted me affectionately. He spoke of what we had just seen in the western sky, explaining that it represented a greeting from the mother goddess Kuma, to her children the Yaruros and to me. The other men came also, and the women too put their arms about me, but the latter kept their faces averted as is proper in Yaruro culture. We settled ourselves on the sands. Small fires were burning with remnants of turtles and crocodiles broiling over them. The sands glistened in the moonlight that soon came upon us. Araguato monkeys roared in the distance. An occasional bird sang. Insects hummed. Toninos frolicking in the water came up to blow lustily. And Landaeta explained that these animals were also children of Kuma and that everyone in Kuma's world was glad that I had returned.

553 123 We smoked and Landaeta talked, recounting what his gods had told him about me; that now I was one of their family, and he affectionately called me "adjimai oteh" (elder brother), which became the standard form of address by all of his people. In return I was asked to call them little brother and little sister.

791 791 533 At a point Landaeta rose and walked away into the darkness. His son and nephew followed him soon afterwards. He returned after an absence of half and hour, wearing his shaman's ceremonial cap and breechclout. He went to sit on the clean white sands to the east of the camp, where he remained still and quiet for a long time. His wife went to him with a lighted cigarette. He smoked this in silence and alone. Finally he made a sign and his son and nephew rose immediately to plant a pole a few feet in front of him, and then retired again into the darkness. After some time Landaeta rose, and facing the east in front of the pole, continued to smoke in silence. It seemed a long time before he began to sing, softly and hesitantly, which time was measured by the rising of the stars. After he had finished two songs his wife approached him again, thrusting into the ground, close to the pole, a stick from which hung a small basket. Landaeta continued standing, facing the east and singing, pausing briefly between

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513 where they believe their gods live. It was only when the sun began
521 to burn our bodies that they approached me to chat. They expressed their concern over my illness and soon busied themselves to make me
123 as comfortable as possible. While I distributed among them a few presents bought for them in Urbana, and turned all of the food over to Landaeta, the younger men were busy building a sun shelter, an arbor of the sweet-smelling guava bush, though for themselves they had only branches thrust into the sands, giving only a thin shade. From now on, I was completely in their care, and they were careful nurses and tender friends. The best of the hunt was mine, and even the women delighted in taking care of my clothing, and in bringing me delicacies.

They were glad to see me, and the women shamans soon began their chants while the men surrounded me and told me in their own language and in broken Spanish what had occurred the previous night.
[562] Men are prohibited from singing during the day, but the women sit in swinging hammocks and chant their songs. I learned, too, that Landaeta's daughter had not died, for there she was, grateful and shyly looking at me, completely well. They attributed her cure to me, though I was not at all responsible for it. During the night, they told me, the gods had come among us, and told them that I, too, was one of Kuma's children, and again they insisted that I was related to them.

787 I learned that Puaná and Itciai are cocreators with Kuma, the
776 mother goddess, and they are directly responsible for the actual creation of the world. Hatchawa, in the form of a litttle boy, is another
773 god who has given mankind fire, the bow and arrow, and many other blessings. Now, when the shaman sings at night his soul leaves his body and travels to the land of Kuma, leaving his body behind. The gods may come then, enter his body in the form of songs, and transmit their messages to the Yaruros. They had come the night before to greet me and to reassure my friends of my goodness and my own powers of shamanism.

512 We sat, smoked, and talked all day. In the afternoon we feasted on crocodile, turtle eggs, wild roots, palm nuts, and honey. Finishing our dinner, we sat quietly facing the west, watching the skies. As the sun set low again, rays of gold, blue, and white shot into the sky from the horizon, and my friends rejoiced at this certain greeting of Kuma to us.

821 Darkness came upon us, and in anticipation of a long night of singing and dancing—I could sing but could not dance, since I could not stand up—I lay on the sands to rest before the beginning of the ceremonies. but the skies interested the Yaruros and they came to tell me what they read there. The brightness of the stars and the changing

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821 formations held a deep fascination for them. I understood but little of it, for their Spanish was too broken, and I was unfamiliar with Yaruro. So we spent the evening in quiet conversation and amity, conscious of the soft voices of the women in the background, children, laughter, and always the throbbing roar of the distant bands of 825 howlers which was brought to us by the wind. To the Yaruros the howlers were formerly men.

Landaeta relayed to me questions uppermost in his wife's mind. Did I have a wife in my own country? Did I have any children? Why had they not come with me? Once in Brazil I had been asked similar questions by another naked primitive fold, and I had answered truthfully that I had neither wife nor children. I remember their confusion and amazement. In their eyes I was a great man, and therefore I should have had many wives and many children. It is certain that they really never believed or understood my answer. So, in this case, not wanting to make extensive explanations about our civilization, which not only does not insist that men and women marry, but even makes it very difficult for them to do so, I lied, answering that I was married and had one son. Of course I had to describe both wife and boy to the inquisitive women. They wanted to know if her skin was the same color as mine, and her hair as white as mine, and what did she wear on her body? Also, they made me 784 promise that some day I would bring my wife and boy to them, so that the women who, because of social taboos, could not converse directly with me, would be able to do so with my wife.

821 As we talked of these things, falling stars played in the heavens, "messengers of Kuma" according to the Yaruros, the big dipper swung higher, and the southern crosses began their journeys. For a while the wind died down, and the monkeys were heard no more. Always responsive to the world in which they live, the Yaruros became silent and still. And then, as the moon rose above the hills of Guiana, Landaeta disappeared in the darkness to return later and begin his singing.

796 Unlike our own religious ceremonies, there was no attempt at creating artificial seriousness. The children played about noisily under 781 the very nose of the shaman without reproof, and the adults talked happily. The imminent communion with the gods was an event of festive proportions and no restraints were put on normal and natural behavior before joyous events.

533 There was no dancing on this night, in deference to me, for I could not participate in it, but we sat in a semicircle and sang after the shaman.

787 Itciai arrived and I was helped to sit close to the shaman. Apparently Itciai was talking about me, referred to as "the Man." I lighted 791 a cigarette and held it to the shaman's mouth. Without interrup-

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775 culture or themselves against a superior culture and ruthless "civilized" bandits. Their only consolation is Kuma and the Land of Kuma.

781 Nevertheless, being realists they not only continue their daily activities of hunting and gathering foods, but also in finding daily solace through their environment and the shamanistic contact with Kuma. The Yaruro is nature conscious. Perhaps his lonely existence has made him ecstatically responsible to the world about him, for often they talked of the beauty of various phenomena; but stronger than any such feeling is their sense of intimate relationship with the sun, the moon, the stars, their animal life. The falling stars at night are interpreted by them to be messengers sent by Kuma to encourage her people, the Yaruros; the moon is friendly, and on moonless nights the stars represent the crowds of their ancestors
825 who live with Kuma. The wind blows incessantly and it blows to them the roar of the araguatos (the howlers), which, to them, represent distant relatives once human beings, but changed into monkeys by life in the trees at the time of the great flood; the toninos, frolicking at night in the water, are also another race who failed to climb the rope which Hatchawa let down to bring his people to the surface. It is in such a friendly world that the Yaruro literally sits, listens,
154 and looks, almost communing with his environment. Perhaps it is not out of place to mention at this point that this reaction on the part of the Yaruros is not difficult to understand, that perhaps we ought not to rationalize this attitude of the Yaruro entirely on the basis of superstition or religious ideas; anyone who has lived on the plains, exposed day and night to nature, soon loses any feeling of lonesomeness. This response on the part of the Yaruros is shared by the llaneros, who do not seem to be so perfectly at ease as when they are alone in the plains.

THE YARURO UNIVERSE

772 According to the Yaruros the world has experienced a series of metamorphoses. Some of the events which have transformed the world from its original form are attributed to the direct intervention of the various gods and races of mankind, but others remain unexplainable.

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177 How much of Yaruro cosmic ideas have been borrowed from the missionaries it is difficult to say at this point. Missionaries have been among them from time to time but the Yaruros have been abandoned so completely so many times that the result and confusion is difficult if not impossible to unravel—a thing which can be done only when we have thorough descriptive studies of the various tribes of the Columbian plains and the tribes of Guiana. The comparative ma-

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criticism of Kuma, and there is even an implication that she always acts with the greatest wisdom.

THE LAND OF KUMA

Kuma lives in the west, apparently beyond the horizon. In the month of March and in early April, about 9 o'clock in the evening, there is a glow in the western sky, a beautiful phenomenon, which the Yaruros explained is the reflection from Kuma's land. Its exact geographic position does not seem to be known and is as hazy as a Catholic's idea of the position of Heaven. For instance, we are told that the stars are both the lights from Kuma Land and the people from that land walking about at night, and yet the Land of Kuma is localized somewhere in the west.

This land is described sometimes as a vast and clean savanna, treeless and full of game, and at other times as a savanna with a huge town in which Kuma and her people live. This latter conception springs from the association the modern Yaruros have between wealth, comfort, power, and those material things which the civilized peoples possess. Towns are included among the products of the civilized. In the same way we find that although the Yaruros are a horseless people, Kuma and her people seem to have an abundance of horses. Apparently those things which are denied the Yaruros in this land are to be found in the next and shamanism is the means of expressing the longings of the living Yaruros.

THE LAND OF KIBEROH

In contrast with the beautiful world in which Kuma lives and to which all Yaruros expect to go, Kiberoh rules over a dark land inhabited by those unfortunate races of mankind left in the hole when the rope dropped by Hatchawa was broken by a too-heavy pregnant woman. Not much is known, nor is there much interest on the part of the Yaruros about this unpleasant region. However, this must not be taken that they have a belief in hell as Father Gumilla reported. According to this author the Yaruros believed in an evil spirit called Tighitighi. On the contrary, my informants identified Tighitighi merely as a large hawk which has no relation to the devil.

PUANÁ

Puaná stands out as the indulgent parent and teacher of Hatchawa. He is also the artisan who invented all of the implements now used by the Yaruros. He is conceived of as the great snake, and in fact is so portrayed on the gourd rattles of the shamans, yet there is a